

10 Unconventional Landlord Tips

As a landlord, your job is to make your rentals as passive and easy as possible. No one wants a call late at night or on Saturday afternoon from a tenant. Follow these unconventional tips to make your life as a landlord a little easier.

1. **Don't ever accept checks:** Every seasoned landlord has heard this one:

“You haven't received the rent check yet? It must must have gotten lost in the mail.”

Insist that your tenants sign-up for direct withdrawal from their bank account. No exceptions. Check out services like [Cozy](#) to automate rent collection.

2. **Remove the garbage disposal:** Tenants will attempt to put all sorts of inappropriate material down the disposal including chicken bones and food packaging. Then, they'll call you when it gets jammed up, stops working and the sink is clogged. If your local code allows, remove the disposal.

3. **Take out the refrigerator's icemaker too:** My icemaker gets jammed up about once per month. It's a constant source of angst. It will be a source of aggravation for you too if you leave it in and a tenant calls every time he can't get ice.

4. **Get a Google Voice phone number:** Never give your tenants your real phone number. Instead, get a [Google Voice](#) number (free!). This is a virtual phone number that you can configure to forward to your real phone. You can also configure it with a custom message that callers receive at preset times. For example:

“Hi, you've reached Bob. If this is an emergency, please leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as possible. If this is not an emergency, I'll return your call during business hours tomorrow.”

5. **Forget carpet:** Will your tenants and their friends care about your home as much as you do? Probably not. If you have carpet in your rental, plan on replacing it as least once every couple of years. An inexpensive and durable solution is [Allura vinyl tile](#). Even a novice can install one of these floors in a couple of hours and they look wonderful. Here is my neighbors':



6. **Paint every room in every house the same color:** Don't get fancy with different colors of paint or textures. Paint everything **Tenant Tan** and make your life simpler when it comes time to touch up the walls.
7. **Set expectations with a signed checklist:** Make absolutely sure that your tenant knows exactly what you expect of him. Consider everything (landscaping, snow removal, smoking, pets, utilities, maintenance, etc.). No detail is too small. List all items in a checklist and have your tenant sign off on every single one.
8. **On move in day, schedule a video walk through with your tenant:** Grab your phone, turn on the camera and start recording. Walk through the home with your tenant, noting the state of each room and any issues. This will go a long way in court when your tenant tries to explain to the judge that the holes in the wall were already there. Make sure to get your tenant on camera during the video, to prove they were present at filming.
9. **Be careful with online leases:** Every state has their own rules. Make sure your lease reflects the laws in your state. Just because you insert a clause into your lease does not make it legal or enforceable.
10. **Change the furnace filters yourself:** Let the tenant know that you'll be changing the furnace filter on a regular schedule. This accomplishes three things:
 - Ensures the furnace is properly maintained.
 - More importantly, a quick visit will let you know that the tenant is keeping up the home and isn't in violation of the lease ("Hey, do I smell a cat?").
 - If the tenant knows you're going to show up regularly, he'll be more likely to comply with the lease terms and keep the place in good condition.

Make sure you follow the local laws for the proper notification you have to give a tenant before stopping by.